

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIO DE 01218 161105Z POSS DUPE
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2973
INFO AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIO DE JANEIRO 1218

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BR
SUBJECT: STATUS OF MAGALHAES PINTO'S CAMPAIGN FOR ARENA PARTY
NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT

REF: BRASILIA 0872

1. IN THE SIX WEEKS SINCE WE LAST REPORTED ON SENATOR
MAGALHAES PINTO'S BID TO WIN THE ARENA PARTY NOMINATION
FOR PRESIDENT AT THE PARTY'S NATIONAL CONVENTION ON
APRIL 8-9 THERE HAVE BEEN NO DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD
INDICATE THAT THE SENATOR, IF HE ALLOWS HIS NAME TO BE
BROUGHT FORTH AT THE CONVENTION, WILL GAIN MORE THAN
ABOUT TEN PERCENT OF CONVENTION VOTES AS FORECAST BY SOME
ARENA LEADERS.

2. THE SENATOR HAS, HOWEVER, NOT BEEN IDLE. HE ISSUED
HIS PLATFORM, WHICH POLITICAL OBSERVERS WERE QUICK TO
NOTE, READ MORE LIKE A POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTO THAN A
CAMPAIGN DOCUMENT. HE FINALLY SELECTED A VICE-PRESIDENTIAL
RUNNING MATE IN WHAT TURNED OUT TO BE ANOTHER ANTI-CLIMAX
IN HIS CAMPAIGN. AFTER MANY HINTS THAT HE MIGHT SELECT
A MILITARY OFFICER, POSSIBLY EVEN ONE ON ACTIVE DUTY,
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ULTIMATELY HE DESIGNATED FORMER MINISTER SEVERO GOMES,
WHO HAS BEEN ONE OF THE PRIME MOVERS IN THE CAMPAIGN.
AND MORE RECENTLY, MAGALHAES HAS INDICATED SOME UNCERTAINTY
OVER WHETHER OR NOT HE WOULD ALLOW HIS NAME TO REACH THE
ARENA PARTY CONVENTION. (MAGALHAES POINTEDLY FAILED TO
ATTEND THE FEBRUARY 23/24 MEETINGS OF THE ARENA NATIONAL
DIRECTORATE WHICH ENDORSED THE CANDIDACIES OF GENERAL

FIGUEIREDO AND GOVERNOR CHAVES.) HE HAS ALSO INDICATED WITH INCREASING OPENNESS THAT HE WOULD POSSIBLY FORM A NEW POLITICAL PARTY (SEVERO GOMES TOLD CONGEN SAO PAULO IN JANUARY THAT "MAGALHAES' CAMPAIGN WOULD FORM THE BASIS OF A LARGE NEW POLITICAL PARTY OF THE CENTER-LEFT"--SEE SAO PAULO 0152).

3. MAGALHAES' NEW FOCUS WAS CONFIRMED BY THE COORDINATOR OF HIS CAMPAIGN, ANTONIO ROCHA DINIZ IN A CONVERSATION WITH CONGEN SAO PAULO POLOFF. IT IS UNCLEAR, HOWEVER, WHETHER IT IS MAGALHAES, WHO IS 68 YEARS OLD, OR HIS ASSOCIATES, SUCH AS SEVERO GOMES OR CASSATED EX-DEPUTY JOSE APARECIDO DE OLIVEIRO, WHO ARE PROVIDING THE IMPETUS FOR CREATION OF A NEW PARTY. CREATION OF A NEW PARTY DEPENDS IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS ON A GOVERNMENT DECISION TO PERMIT A MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM--A DECISION WHICH MAY HINGE ON THE RESULTS OF THE NOVEMBER DIRECT ELECTION.

4. EMBASSY CONCURS.
DEXTER

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